IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for collaborating on due diligence issues to affect efficient asset underwriting and process knowledge building within due diligence teams using a computer system coupled to a data repository, said method comprising the steps of:

accumulating knowledge from prior due diligence exercises including valuating assets in a portfolio individually and collectively by segmenting the portfolio of assets into three valuation portions and by:

underwriting each asset individually included within a first portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the first portion of the portfolio, wherein underwriting includes analyzing an asset in accordance with predetermined criteria, and determining a current purchase price for buying the asset and a confidence factor representing a confidence in recovering the determined purchase price ~~associated with an investment return for the asset~~ based on the analysis,

grouping and underwriting a sample of assets included within a second portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the second portion of the portfolio based on the underwritten sample assets, each sample asset having descriptive attributes common to at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion such that each sample asset represents at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion, and

using the computer to statistically infer a value for assets included within a third portion of the asset portfolio using an iterative process including grouping the assets included within the third portion of the portfolio into clusters using descriptive attributes of the assets included within the third portion, wherein the statistically inferring a value of assets included within the third portion is based on underwriting values and variances of the first and second portions of the portfolio.

wherein the portfolio of segmented assets includes assets included within the first portion having at least one of an original value that is larger than the original value of the assets included within the second and third portions, and a variance that is smaller than the variances of the assets included within the second and third portions;

storing the accumulated knowledge in the data repository;

accessing the stored, accumulated knowledge in the data repository from prior due diligence exercises;

conducting a current due diligence exercise;

applying the accumulated knowledge from past due diligence exercises to the current due diligence exercise; and

storing newly accumulated knowledge from the current due diligence exercise into the data repository of accumulated knowledge.

2. (original) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of accessing stored, accumulated knowledge in a repository further comprises the step of accessing a suite of at least one of business processes, computer systems, analytical tools, financial models, data manipulation tools, business process tools, methodologies and analytics.

3. (original) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of accessing stored, accumulated knowledge in a repository further comprises the step of accessing a high level map and associated descriptions of the roles and responsibilities within the due diligence team such that team members can see who has functional responsibilities, how the team members as individuals fit into the due diligence team and who to contact for information.

4. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of applying the accumulated knowledge from past due diligence exercises further comprises the step of accessing a due diligence project timeline with milestones and tasks arranged as at least one of

Gantt charts, PERT charts and text such that key deliverable timing is developed at the beginning of the due diligence project with inputs from due diligence team members.

5. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of accessing a project feedback mechanism including graphical indicators for tracking key due diligence deliverables including at least one of types and quantities of underwriting completed, total project budget and status of deliverables.

6. (original) A method according to Claim 5 wherein said step of accessing a project feedback mechanism further comprises the step of accessing a due diligence project calendar with notable local and global dates identified.

7. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of storing contact information of due diligence team members and collaborators including at least one of telephone numbers, e-mail address and postal address information.

8. (original) A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of storing a due diligence project to do list and status for items on the to do list.

9. (original) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of storing newly accumulated knowledge further comprises the step of creating a shared storage place for various due diligence functions to store project files and information such that team members and collaborators can access and retrieve the information.

10. (original) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of storing newly accumulated knowledge further comprises the step of creating an information flow map that identifies sources and uses of information utilized to make due diligence decisions.

11. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of accessing stored, accumulated knowledge further comprises the step of accessing historical best practices stored within the data repository from past due diligence exercises.

12. (original) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of accessing stored, accumulated knowledge further comprises the step of accessing a database of relevant valuation information and facts associated with the due diligence to evaluate a portfolio of assets.

13. (currently amended) A system for enabling a due diligence team collaborating on due diligence issues to obtain efficient knowledge building, said system comprising:

at least one computer;

at least one server configured to:

store accumulated knowledge in a data repository from prior due diligence exercises including data relating to valuating assets in a portfolio by:

segmenting the portfolio of assets into three valuation portions,

underwriting each asset included within a first portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the first portion of the portfolio, wherein underwriting includes analyzing an asset in accordance with predetermined criteria, and determining a current purchase price for buying the asset and a confidence factor representing a confidence in recovering the determined purchase price ~~associated with an investment return for the asset~~ based on the analysis,

grouping and underwriting a sample of assets included within a second portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the second portion of the portfolio based on the underwritten sample assets, each sample asset having descriptive attributes common to at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion such that each sample asset represents at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion, and

statistically inferring a value for each asset included within a third portion of the asset portfolio using an iterative process including grouping the assets included

within the third portion of the portfolio into clusters using descriptive attributes of the assets included within the third portion, wherein the statistically inferring a value of assets included within the third portion is based on underwriting values and variances of the first and second portions of the portfolio;

wherein the portfolio of segmented assets includes assets included within the first portion having at least one of an original value that is larger than the original value of the assets included within the second and third portions, and a variance that is smaller than the variances of the assets included within the second and third portions;

access the stored, accumulated knowledge in the data repository from prior due diligence exercises for a current due diligence exercise;

apply the accumulated knowledge from past due diligence exercises to the current due diligence exercise; and

store newly accumulated knowledge from the current due diligence exercise into the data repository of accumulated knowledge; and

a network connecting said at least one computer to said server, said server further configured to access information over the Internet.

14. (original) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with a suite of at least one of business processes, computer systems, analytical tools, financial models, data manipulation tools, business process tools, methodologies and analytics.

15. (original) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with a high level map and associated descriptions of the roles and responsibilities within the due diligence team such that team members can see who has functional responsibilities, how the team members as individuals fit into the due diligence team and who to contact for information.

16. (original) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with a due diligence project timeline with milestones and tasks arranged as at least one of Gantt charts, PERT charts and text to develop key deliverable timing with input from due diligence team members.

17. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with a project feedback mechanism including graphical indicators for tracking key due diligence deliverables including at least one of types and quantities of underwriting completed, financial risk and return metrics, total project budget and status of deliverables.

18. (original) A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server configured with a due diligence project calendar with notable local and global dates identified.

19. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with contact information of due diligence team members and collaborators including at least one of telephone numbers, e-mail address and postal address information.

20. (original) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with a due diligence project to do list and status for items on the to do list.

21. (original) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with a shared storage place for various due diligence functions to store project files and information such that team members and collaborators can access and retrieve the information.

22. (original) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with an information flow map that identifies sources and uses of information utilized to make due diligence decisions.

23. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with historical best practices generated from past due diligence exercises.

24. (original) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server configured with a database of relevant valuation information and facts associated with the due diligence to evaluate a portfolio of assets.

25. (currently amended) A computer configured to provide a due diligence team collaborating on due diligence issues with efficient knowledge building, said computer programmed to:

accumulate knowledge from prior due diligence exercises including valuating assets in a portfolio individually and collectively by segmenting the portfolio of assets into three valuation portions and by:

underwriting each asset included within a first portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the first portion of the portfolio, wherein underwriting includes analyzing an asset in accordance with predetermined criteria, and determining a current purchase price for buying the asset and a confidence factor representing a confidence in recovering the determined purchase price ~~associated with an investment return for the asset~~ based on the analysis,

grouping and underwriting a sample of assets included within a second portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the second portion of the portfolio based on the underwritten sample assets, each sample asset having descriptive attributes common to at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion such that each sample asset represents at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion, and

statistically inferring a value and risk for each asset included within a third portion of the asset portfolio using an iterative process including grouping the assets included within the third portion of the portfolio into clusters using descriptive attributes of the assets included within the third portion, wherein the statistically inferring a value of assets included within the third portion is based on underwriting values and variances of the first and second portions of the portfolio;

wherein the portfolio of segmented assets includes assets included within the first portion having at least one of an original value that is larger than the original value of the assets included within the second and third portions, and a variance that is smaller than the variances of the assets included within the second and third portions;

store the accumulated knowledge in a data repository;

access the stored, accumulated knowledge in the data repository from prior due diligence exercises;

conduct a current due diligence exercise;

apply the accumulated knowledge from past due diligence exercises to the current due diligence exercise; and

store newly accumulated knowledge from the current due diligence exercise into the data repository of accumulated knowledge.

26. (original) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with a suite of at least one of business processes, computer systems, analytical tools, financial models, data manipulation tools, business process tools, methodologies and analytics.

27. (original) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with a high level map and associated descriptions of the roles and responsibilities within the due diligence team such that team members can see who has functional responsibilities, how the team members as individuals fit into the due diligence team and who to contact for information.

28. (original) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with a due diligence project timeline with milestones and tasks arranged as at least one of Gantt charts, PERT charts and text to develop key deliverable timing with input from due diligence team members.

29. (previously presented) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with a project feedback mechanism including graphical indicators for tracking key due diligence

deliverables including at least one of types and quantities of underwriting completed, total project budget and status of deliverables.

30. (cancelled)

31. (previously presented) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with contact information of due diligence team members and collaborators including at least one of telephone numbers, e-mail address and postal address information.

32. (original) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with a due diligence project to do list and status for items on the to do list.

33. (original) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with a shared storage place for various due diligence functions to store project files and information such that team members and collaborators can access and retrieve the information.

34. (original) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with an information flow map that identifies sources and uses of information utilized to make due diligence decisions.

35. (previously presented) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with historical best practices generated from past due diligence exercises.

36. (original) A computer according to Claim 25 programmed with a database of relevant valuation information and facts associated with the due diligence to evaluate a portfolio of assets.

37. (currently amended) A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium to provide a due diligence team collaborating on due diligence issues with efficient asset underwriting and process knowledge building, said computer program comprising a code segment that:

sets up a directory structure to organize information into a centralized database, wherein the information includes knowledge from prior due diligence exercises accumulated at least partially by valuating assets in a portfolio individually and collectively by:

underwriting each asset included within a first portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the first portion of the portfolio, wherein underwriting includes analyzing an asset in accordance with predetermined criteria, and determining a current purchase price for buying the asset and a confidence factor representing a confidence in recovering the determined purchase price ~~associated with an investment return for the asset~~ based on the analysis,

grouping and underwriting a sample of assets included within a second portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the second portion of the portfolio based on the underwritten sample assets, each sample asset having descriptive attributes common to at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion such that each sample asset represents at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion, and

statistically inferring a value and risk for each asset included within a third portion of the asset portfolio using an iterative process including grouping the assets included within the third portion of the portfolio into clusters using descriptive attributes of the assets included within the third portion, wherein the statistically inferring a value of assets included within the third portion is based on underwriting values and variances of the first and second portions of the portfolio; and

wherein the portfolio of segmented assets includes assets included within the first portion having at least one of an original value that is larger than the original value of the assets included within the second and third portions, and a variance that is smaller than the variances of the assets included within the second and third portions; and

provides users access to the information stored in the centralized database to facilitate decision making in response to an inquiry.

38. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 37 further includes a code segment that:

manages the information in the centralized database;

manages project timeline with milestones and tasks arranged in a standardized project management format; and

provides feedback to various participants in an easily readable set of graphical indicators to track project deliverables.

39. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 38 wherein the code segment that manages the information in the centralized database further includes a code segment that:

identifies sources and uses of the information which will be utilized to make decisions on due diligence objectives;

accumulates the information on at least one of financial models, business methodologies, business process tools, historical data on best practices, relevant valuation information, and transactional facts based information into the centralized database; and

maintains the database by adding, deleting and updating information to keep the project files in such a fashion to allow collaborators easy access to global information.

40. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 38 wherein the code segment that manages project timeline further includes a code segment that manages at least one of a project feedback mechanism, a project calendar, project contact information with team members and collaborators' information, project "to do" list and status.

41. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 40 wherein the code segment that manages project timeline further includes a code segment that manages at least one of high level organizational chart showing roles and responsibilities of collaborators, relationship among various collaborators and how they fit into overall organization scheme, and information on whom to contact for information.

42. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 37 further includes a code segment that generates management reports.

43. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 37 further includes a code segment that provides flexibility to an administrator to modify user profile information.

44. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 37 further includes a code segment that provides online help to the user by downloading a user manual on to a client device.

45. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 37 further includes a code segment that organizes information within the centralized database under at least one of a Deal Valuation section, a Dashboards section, a Dictionary section, a Tool Library section, a Pitch Repository section, a Collaborative Workspace section, and a Post Mortem section.

46. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 37 further includes a code segment that retrieves information by accessing various other links.

47. (currently amended) A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for managing due diligence, said computer program capable to be processed by a server system coupled to a centralized interactive database and at least one client system, comprising:

a code segment that receives information including knowledge from prior due diligence exercises accumulated at least partially by valuating assets in a portfolio individually and collectively by:

underwriting each asset included within a first portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the first portion of the portfolio, wherein underwriting includes analyzing an asset in accordance with predetermined criteria, and determining a current purchase price for buying the asset and a confidence factor representing a confidence in recovering the determined purchase price ~~associated with an investment return for the asset~~ based on the analysis,

grouping and underwriting a sample of assets included within a second portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the second portion of the portfolio based on the underwritten sample assets, each sample asset having descriptive attributes common to at least one non-sample asset included within the

second portion such that each sample asset represents at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion, and

statistically inferring a value and risk for each asset included within a third portion of the asset portfolio using an iterative process including grouping the assets included within the third portion of the portfolio into clusters using descriptive attributes of the assets included within the third portion, wherein the statistically inferring a value of assets included within the third portion is based on underwriting values and variances of the first and second portions of the portfolio; and

wherein the portfolio of segmented assets includes assets included within the first portion having at least one of an original value that is larger than the original value of the assets included within the second and third portions, and a variance that is smaller than the variances of the assets included within the second and third portions; and

a code segment that enters the information into a centralized database;

a code segment that stores the information into the centralized database and cross-reference the information against unique identifiers; and

a code segment that provides the information in response to an inquiry.

48. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 47 wherein the network is a wide area network operable using a protocol including at least one of TCP/IP and IPX.

49. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 47 wherein the information is received from the user via a graphical user interface.

50. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 47 further includes a code segment that provides the information based on access levels.

51. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 47 further includes a code segment that monitors interaction between various collaborators during due diligence.

52. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 47 includes a code segment that displays information through an HTML document downloaded by the server system.

53. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 47 further comprising:

a code segment that accesses the centralized database;

a code segment that searches the database regarding the specific inquiry;

a code segment that retrieves information from the database; and

a code segment that causes the retrieved information to be displayed on the client system.

54. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 47 wherein the client system and the server system are connected via a network and wherein the network is one of a wide area network, a local area network, an intranet and the Internet.

55. (original) The computer program as recited in Claim 47, and further comprising a code segment that monitors the security of the system by restricting access to unauthorized individuals.

56. (currently amended) A centralized database comprising:

data corresponding to various projects;

data corresponding to flow maps identifying sources and uses of the information;

data corresponding to financial models and business process tools;

data corresponding to best practices; and

data corresponding to valuation process and underwriting including knowledge from prior due diligence exercises accumulated at least partially by valuating assets in a portfolio individually and collectively by:

underwriting each asset included within a first portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the first portion of the portfolio, wherein underwriting includes analyzing an asset in accordance with predetermined criteria, and determining a current purchase price for buying the asset and a confidence factor representing a confidence in recovering the determined purchase price ~~associated with an investment return for the asset~~ based on the analysis,

grouping and underwriting a sample of assets included within a second portion of the asset portfolio to calculate a value of each asset included within the second portion of the portfolio based on the underwritten sample assets, each sample asset having descriptive attributes common to at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion such that each sample asset represents at least one non-sample asset included within the second portion, and

statistically inferring a value and risk for each asset included within a third portion of the asset portfolio using an iterative process including grouping the assets included within the third portion of the portfolio into clusters using descriptive attributes of the assets included within the third portion, wherein the statistically inferring a value of assets included within the third portion is based on underwriting values and variances of the first and second portions of the portfolio,

wherein the portfolio of segmented assets includes assets included within the first portion having at least one of an original value that is larger than the original value of the assets included within the second and third portions, and a variance that is smaller than the variances of the assets included within the second and third portions.

57. (original) A database according to Claim 56 wherein said database is checked for data integrity frequently and provides access to individuals based on predefined criteria.

58. (original) A database according to Claim 56 wherein said database further configured to be protected from access by unauthorized individuals.

59. (cancelled)